THE CITY OF BURLESON TEXAS

Department Memo

City Council Regular Meeting

DEPARTMENT: **Information Technology**

FROM: **James Grommersch, Chief Technology Officer**

MEETING: **May 5, 2025**

SUBJECT:

Receive a report, hold a discussion, and provide staff direction regarding the BTX-IT Radio Refit and Resilient Public Safety Communications program. *(Staff Contact: James Grommersch, Chief Technology Officer)*

SUMMARY:

On March 4th, 2024, Council approved the comprehensive refit of BTX Radios for all first responder departments, including Police, Fire, Dispatch, and Emergency Operations. This initiative included the replacement of a total of 189 devices; a combination of handheld and vehicle-mounted units; designed to modernize our radio communications infrastructure and support citywide first responder capabilities. This project is a critical part of BTX-IT's strategy to strengthen communication redundancy across the City, and to improve service in areas historically impacted by poor coverage. The new devices are capable of operating across multiple network segments, including traditional radio, cellular, and Wi-Fi, ensuring seamless, uninterrupted communication for first responders, regardless of location.

Deployment Status, Training & Remote Support Enhancements
Deployment of the new radios was successfully completed during the week of March 24–28. All units are now in service, and we are currently working with our vendor to roll out comprehensive training sessions for both administrators and end users. These sessions will focus on unlocking and applying the full range of features offered by the upgraded devices, including enhanced connectivity, GPS tracking, and situational awareness tools.

A major improvement with this upgrade is the ability to remotely program and update radios. Previously, devices had to be brought in for changes, taking them out of service. Now, configurations and updates can be made over-the-air, improving support efficiency, reducing downtime, and enabling faster response to evolving needs.

This also enhances interoperability, allowing us to quickly adjust settings or talkgroups in real time during joint operations or emergencies, keeping our teams connected without interruption.

Centralized Management & Radio Count Optimization
As part of our centralized management initiative, BTX-IT has conducted a full audit of radio assets across all departments. Previously, the City's participation in the Johnson County (JoCo) radio system listed 371 active radios. Through strategic consolidation and reassignment, we have reduced that number to 320, a reduction of 51 units, resulting in an estimated annual savings of approximately $16,379.

Reuse and Regional Collaboration
In an effort to responsibly manage legacy equipment, BTX-IT has partnered with the County to sell approximately 47 of the legacy radios that are still supported by the vendor. In addition, we have extended similar offers to other agencies within Johnson County, BISD, and have engaged the Texas Association of Government IT Managers (TAGITM) to promote regional/statewide collaboration. These efforts reflect our continued commitment to being seen as a strong regional technology partner and a responsible steward of public resources.

Planning for Future Infrastructure Costs
Looking ahead, BTX-IT is working closely with the City Manager's Office (CMO) and the Finance Department on the creation of a **Radio Equipment and Infrastructure Replacement Fund (RE-ERF)**. This fund will ensure that we are proactively planning for future costs associated not just with handheld units, but also with the underlying County radio infrastructure.

It has been communicated to all network participants that the JoCo Radio Core Infrastructure will be approaching end-of-life between 2030 and 2032. BTX-IT has already begun conversations with the JoCo Radio Team to stay informed and understand future upgrade paths and cost implications. Once we have gathered sufficient information, we will present a comprehensive update to the Finance Council Committees to review options and determine our long-term strategy.

Next Steps: Enhancing School Communications
As part of our continuous improvement efforts across the City's technology ecosystem, BTX-IT is now coordinating with the Burleson Independent School District (BISD) to implement dedicated Wi-Fi networks compatible with the new radios. This will significantly improve communication capabilities within school facilities.

Completion of the Public Safety Resiliency Program & Statewide Recognition
With the successful completion of this project, it marks the official completion of BTX-IT's Resilient Public Safety Communications Program, a multi-phase initiative aimed at strengthening the City's emergency communication capabilities, enhancing operational continuity, and ensuring first responders are equipped with the tools needed to serve and protect the community under any condition.
The completion of this program was made possible through a strong partnership between the Police, Fire, Dispatch, Emergency Operations, and BTX-IT. Each group played a critical role in shaping the requirements, validating field functionality, and supporting the deployment of new technologies that enhance safety, real-time response, and interagency coordination.

On April 23rd BTX-IT was honored to receive the **Excellence Award** from the Texas Association of Governmental Information Technology Managers (TAGITM), at the annual TAGITM conference. This award recognizes local government organizations that lead the way in innovation and the effective use of technology to serve their communities.

It's a meaningful acknowledgment of the work we've done together; building a resilient, modern communications infrastructure that supports critical public safety operations. It also highlights the dedication, teamwork, and continual improvement mindset that defines BTX-IT.

RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

PRIOR ACTION/INPUT (Council, Boards, Citizens):

N/A

REFERENCE:

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

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